

Outreach and Education to the American Indian and Alaska Native Beneficiary

In 2004, CMS worked closely with the Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) to deliver training, outreach and education to the Indian Health Care Provider network. Through the CMS Central and Regional offices, we coordinated training sessions for administrative and provider staff in facilities administered by the Indian Health Service, Tribes, Tribal Organizations and Urban Indian programs. We encouraged Drug Card Sponsors to work closely with the Indian Health Care Provider system in efforts to reach AI/AN beneficiaries. As a result of these efforts, we believe CMS strengthened its collaborative working relationship with Indian Health Service and more importantly, we got important program information to the beneficiary where it counts.

We want to build on this.

On January 1, 2006, the Medicare Prescription Benefit will replace the interim Drug Card benefit. CMS will continue seeking advice from the TTAG and as with the Drug Card; we will follow the same model, using the Indian Health Service Area Office structure, to deliver training, outreach and education to individuals who are instrumental in reaching the Medicare eligible beneficiary served by these facilities.

Over the next few months we will be working with the TTAG to identify appropriate timeframes and materials that would have the most impact in getting Prescription Drug Benefit information to those American Indian and Alaska Native beneficiaries served by the Indian Health Care system.